GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3890
ANSWERED ON:22.12.2015
Forest Land for Pilgrimage Centres
Gandhi Shri Dilip Kumar Mansukhlal

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has any policy/guidelines for allotment of forest land for developing pilgrimage centres and providing facilities to the pilgrims and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the Government has received proposals from various States for allotment of forest land for developing pilgrimage centres and creation of amenities to pilgrims including "Mohata Devsthan" in Maharashtra; and
(c) if so, the details and the present status of these proposals, State-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) Use of forest land for non-forest purpose, including developing pilgrimage centres and providing facilities to the pilgrims, requires prior approval of Central Government under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FC Act). Proposals seeking prior approval of Central Government under Section 2 the FC Act for use of forest land for developing pilgrimage centres and providing facilities to the pilgrims are processed in accordance with the provisions of the FC Act and Rules and Guidelines framed thereunder. There is no separate policy/guideline for processing of such proposals.

(b) &(c) During the last three years the Central Government received 26 proposals seeking prior approval under Section-2 of the FC Act for use of forest land for developing pilgrimage centres and providing facilities to the pilgrims. State-wise details along with present status of these proposals are annexed.

As far as developing pilgrimage centre and creation of amenities to pilgrims at "Mohata Devsthan" in Maharashtra is concerned, the Central Government received a proposal seeking prior approval under Section-2 of the FC Act for diversion of 4.96 hectares of Reserve Forest land in favour of the Chief Executive Officer, Shri Jagdamba Devi Public Trust, Mohate, Taluka Pathardi, District Ahmadnagar for renovation of Shri Jagadambadevi Temple. The Central Government vide letter dated 27.06.2006 accorded formal approval under Section-2 of the FC Act for diversion of 1.25 hecatres of forest land. Prior approval under Section-2 of the FC Act for diversion of the balance 3.71 hecatres of forest land was not accorded. Subsequently, on 02.05.2008 Government of Maharashtra again submitted a proposal for diversion of the said 3.71 hectares of Reserve Forest land. Regional Office (Western Zone), Bhopal of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change vide letter dated 04.06.2008 rejected the said proposal.
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